

FTA Authorization Fact Sheet Other Than Urbanized Area Formula Program

Purpose

Provides capital and operating assistance for rural and small urban public transportation systems.

Eligibility

Eligible recipient may include state agencies, local public bodies and agencies thereof, nonprofit organizations, Indian tribes, and operators of public transportation services, including intercity bus service, in rural and small urban areas. Private for-profit operators of transit or paratransit services may participate in the program only through contracts with eligible recipients.

Statutory References

49 U.S.C. Sections 5311 and 5340

Features

- Provides formula capital and operating grants to States for services in other-than-urbanized areas.
- New separate funding for Indian tribes.
- Twenty percent of Section 5311 funds are distributed through a new tier-based formula based on land area. The remaining 80 percent of funds is allocated by the existing formula based on population in other-than-urbanized areas. Funds are augmented by allocations from the Growing States Formula. Amounts above include both basic 5311 and 5340 funds for other than urbanized areas.
- Secretary approves a State plan based on equitable distribution of funds including to Indian Tribes, and ensuring maximum feasible coordination with other rural transportation services.
- States must consult with affected intercity bus service providers before certifying to the Secretary that intercity bus service needs of the State are being adequately met without making the 15 percent allocation of funds to such services.
- Codifies current practice by requiring the Secretary of Labor to use a Special Warranty to comply with the requirements of Section 5333(b) (labor protections).
- The share for capital projects is 80 percent federal; for operating costs the share is 50 percent federal. Applies the sliding scale federal match under section 120(b) of title 23, United States Code, for cases in which a state has a very high percentage of federal lands; for operating projects the share is 5/8 of the sliding scale share for capital projects.
- To encourage coordination among federal agencies that provide transportation services, the matching funds may be provided from federal agencies other than the Department of Transportation. Federal Lands Highway funds, though part of the Department of Transportation, may also be used as matching funds.
- The rural transit assistance program (RTAP) is funded with a 2 percent set-aside of the section 5311 grant funds, rather than from the Research program, as in current law. Up to 15 percent (of the 2 percent) may be used for RTAP projects of a national scope to sustain ongoing national activities.
- Recipients of Section 5311 funds must submit annual data on service levels, costs, and revenues to the National Transit Database. These requirements will be tailored to the smaller size of the typical public transportation system in rural areas, while still providing enough information to judge the condition and performance of rural public transportation services.

Information Courtesy of U.S. Department of Transportation- Federal Transit Administration

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